



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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May 12, 2011

TO: Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Mayor  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe

FROM: Wendy L. Watanabe  
Auditor-Controller

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Wendy Watanabe", is written over the printed name and title.

SUBJECT: **SECURE TRANSITIONS FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT  
REVIEW – A DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES  
PROVIDER**

We have completed a contract compliance review of Secure Transitions Foster Family Agency (Secure Transitions or Agency), a Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) provider. The purpose of our review was to determine whether Secure Transitions was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and the County contract. We completed our review during October 2008 and conducted a follow-up review in March 2010.

DCFS contracts with Secure Transitions, a private non-profit community-based organization to recruit, train and certify foster parents for supervising children DCFS places in foster care. Once the Agency places a child, it is required to monitor the placement until the child is discharged from the program. Secure Transitions oversees 26 certified foster homes in which 32 DCFS children were placed at the time of our review. Secure Transitions is located in the Second District. DCFS paid Secure Transitions approximately \$662,000 and \$656,000 during Fiscal Years 2008-09 and 2009-10, respectively.

**Results of Review**

Secure Transitions did not always ensure that the foster homes, case files, and staff complied with the County contract and California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Title 22 regulations. In addition, during our follow-up review in 2010, Secure Transitions

still had not resolved many of the issues that existed during our 2008 review. For example:

- Two (40%) of the five Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) reviewed in 2008 contained inaccurate information and did not include a thorough discussion on emancipation readiness issues. In addition, four (80%) of the five NSPs did not have goals that were specific, measurable or time-limited and some of the goals were not age-appropriate. This issue was also noted in our Secure Transitions contract review report issued on April 24, 2007.

During our follow-up review in 2010, all three additional NSPs reviewed had appropriate goals. However, one (33%) of the NSPs had conflicting information.

*Secure Transitions' attached response indicates that their administrator will review all NSPs to ensure accuracy and that they include appropriate goals.*

- One (50%) of the two NSPs reviewed in 2008 for children taking psychotropic medication did not include a discussion on the children's use of the medication as required. This issue was also noted in our report issued on April 24, 2007.

During our follow-up review in 2010, one (33%) of the three additional NSPs reviewed for children taking psychotropic medication did not include a discussion on the children's use of the medication. In addition, all three children's case files did not have required documentation of monthly evaluations by the prescribing physician and did not have up-to-date medication logs. However, the foster parents and the children indicated that they were taking their medication and were seen monthly by the prescribing physician.

*Secure Transitions' attached response indicates that they will ensure NSPs include a discussion on the children's use of psychotropic medication.*

- Three (60%) of the five case files reviewed in 2008 did not have documentation that the children's DCFS social workers were provided with monthly updates on the children's progress.

During our follow-up review in 2010, all five additional case files reviewed did not have documentation that the children's DCFS social workers were provided with monthly updates. For three children, the last documented update was five months old and for two children, the last documented update was two months old.

*Secure Transitions' attached response indicates that they will ensure their social workers contact DCFS monthly with updates on the children's progress.*

- Two (40%) of the five children reviewed in 2008 exceeded the maximum age (17 years old) for services and the Agency did not have documentation of an exception

from CDSS Community Care Licensing (CCL) as required. This issue was also noted in our report issued on April 24, 2007.

During our follow-up review in 2010, two (67%) of the three additional children reviewed exceeded the maximum age and the Agency did not have documentation of an exception from CCL.

*Secure Transitions' attached response indicates that they will ensure that all children meet the age criteria.*

- Two (40%) of the five children reviewed in 2008 received initial dental examinations 51 and 84 days late, respectively. This issue was also noted in our report issued on April 24, 2007.

During our follow-up review in 2010, two (67%) of the three additional children reviewed both received initial dental examinations 13 days late.

*Secure Transitions' attached response indicates that they will remind foster parents of medical and dental examination due dates to ensure children receive examinations timely.*

Details of our review, along with recommendations for corrective action, are attached.

### **Review of Report**

We discussed our report with Secure Transitions on January 18, 2011. In their attached response (Attachment I), Secure Transitions management indicates the actions the Agency has taken to implement the recommendations. We also notified DCFS of the results of our initial and follow-up reviews. In their response (Attachment II), DCFS indicates that, due to the repeated findings, they will assess the Agency for full implementation of our recommendations within six months and determine if progressive action is warranted.

We thank Secure Transitions management for their cooperation and assistance during our review. Please call me if you have any questions or your staff may contact Don Chadwick at (213) 253-0301.

WLW:JET:DC:AA

#### **Attachments**

- c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer  
Jackie Contreras, Ph.D, Interim Director, DCFS  
Linda Lakso, Board of Directors Chair, Secure Transitions  
Dr. Melvin Moore, Executive Director, Secure Transitions  
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing  
Public Information Office  
Audit Committee

**FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM  
SECURE TRANSITIONS FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY  
FISCAL YEARS 2008-09 AND 2009-10**

**BACKGROUND**

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) pays Secure Transitions Foster Family Agency (Secure Transitions or Agency) a negotiated monthly rate, per child placement, established by the California Department of Social Services' (CDSS) Foster Care Rates Bureau. Based on the child's age, the Agency receives between \$1,430 and \$1,679 per month, per child. DCFS paid Secure Transitions approximately \$662,000 and \$656,000 during Fiscal Years (FY) 2008-09 and 2009-10, respectively.

**PURPOSE/METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of our review was to determine whether Secure Transitions was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and the County contract. We reviewed certified foster parent files, children's case files, personnel files and interviewed the Agency's staff. We also visited a number of certified foster homes and interviewed the children and foster parents. We completed our review during October 2008 and conducted a follow-up review in March 2010.

**BILLED SERVICES**

**Objective**

Determine whether Secure Transitions provided program services in accordance with their County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

**Verification**

We visited three of the 26 Los Angeles County certified foster homes that Secure Transitions billed DCFS and interviewed three foster parents and five foster children placed in the three homes. In addition, we reviewed the case files for three foster parents and five children and we reviewed the Agency's monitoring activity. During March 2010, we visited two foster homes and reviewed additional foster parents' and children's case files.

**Results**

During our 2008 review, Secure Transitions did not always comply with the County contract requirements and CDSS Title 22 regulations. For example, the Agency did not ensure that foster parent certification files, children's case files, Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) and Quarterly Reports had all the required information. The Agency also did not ensure children's initial dental examinations and Quarterly Reports were completed timely, NSPs were accurate and approved by DCFS social workers, and



DCFS social workers were provided with monthly updates on the children's progress. In addition, Secure Transitions did not renew exceptions obtained from CDSS Community Care Licensing (CCL) before billing DCFS for children that exceeded the maximum age for services. During our follow-up review in 2010, Secure Transitions still had not resolved many of the conditions that existed during our 2008 review. Specifically, we noted the following:

#### Foster Parent Certification

- One (33%) of the three foster homes reviewed in 2008 was not assessed by Secure Transitions to ensure the foster parents could care for more than two children. At the time of our review, three children were placed in the home. This issue was also noted in our Secure Transitions contract review report issued on April 24, 2007.

During our follow up-review in 2010, we confirmed that the home from our 2008 review and two additional homes reviewed were appropriately assessed.

- Two (67%) of the three foster parents reviewed in 2008 did not complete the required 15 hours of annual continuing education training. At the time of our review, the two foster parents had completed five and 12 hours of training, respectively. This issue was also noted in our report issued on April 24, 2007.

During our follow-up review in 2010, the four additional foster parents reviewed completed the required training.

- One (33%) of the three foster parent files reviewed in 2008 did not include a current driver's license and proof of auto insurance. This issue was also noted in our report issued on April 24, 2007. In addition, the foster parent's CPR certificate had expired. Subsequent to our review, the Agency provided documentation of a current driver's license and proof of auto insurance. In addition, the foster parent completed the required CPR training.

During our follow-up review in 2010, the foster parent's proof of auto insurance was no longer current. In addition, one (33%) of the three additional foster parents' files reviewed did not have a current CPR certificate.

#### Needs and Services Plans and Children's Case Files

- Four (80%) of the five NSPs reviewed in 2008 were not approved by the DCFS social workers as required. This issue was also noted in our report issued on April 24, 2007.

During our follow-up review in 2010, all three additional NSPs reviewed were not approved by the DCFS social workers.

- Two (40%) of the five NSPs reviewed in 2008 contained inaccurate information. Specifically, the NSPs indicated the children were under 14 years old, were too young for emancipation services and were unemployed although they were 19 year-old young adults and were employed. In addition, the two NSPs did not include a thorough discussion on emancipation readiness issues.

During our follow-up review in 2010, one (33%) of the three additional NSPs reviewed had conflicting information. Specifically, the NSP stated that Family Reunification services were completed but later indicates that Family Reunification services were not yet completed.

- Four (80%) of the five NSPs reviewed in 2008 did not have goals that were specific, measurable or time-limited. In addition, some of the goals in the NSPs were not age-appropriate. This issue was also noted in our report issued on April 24, 2007.

During our follow-up review in 2010, all three additional NSPs reviewed had goals that were specific, measurable and time-limited.

- One (50%) of the two NSPs reviewed in 2008 for children taking psychotropic medication did not include a discussion on the children's use of the medication as required. This issue was also noted in our report issued on April 24, 2007.

During our follow-up review in 2010, one (33%) of the three additional NSPs reviewed for children taking psychotropic medication did not include a discussion on the children's use of the medication. In addition, all three children's case files did not have required documentation of monthly evaluations by the prescribing physician and did not have up-to-date medication logs. However, the foster parents and the children indicated that they were taking their medication and were seen monthly by the prescribing physician.

- One (20%) of the five Quarterly Reports reviewed in 2008 was prepared three months late. This issue was also noted in our report issued on April 24, 2007.

During our follow-up review in 2010, three (75%) of the four additional Quarterly Reports reviewed were prepared late. Two of the reports were prepared approximately one month late and one was prepared five months late.

- Two (40%) of the five Quarterly Reports reviewed in 2008 did not include details of the children's progress on their goals as required. This issue was also noted in our report issued on April 24, 2007.

During our follow-up review in 2010, two (50%) of the four additional Quarterly Reports reviewed did not include details of the children's progress on their goals.

- Two (40%) of the five Quarterly Reports reviewed in 2008 did not include the children's report cards as required.

During our follow-up review in 2010, one (25%) of the four additional Quarterly Reports reviewed did not include the children's report cards.

- Three (60%) of the five case files reviewed in 2008 did not have documentation that the children's DCFS social workers were provided with monthly updates on the children's progress.

During our follow-up review in 2010, all five additional case files reviewed did not have documentation that the children's DCFS social workers were provided with monthly updates. For three children, the last documented update was five months old and for two children, the last documented update was two months old.

- One (20%) of the five case files reviewed in 2008 did not have documentation that the children or their DCFS social workers were informed of the children's personal rights and the Agency's policies and procedures as required. This issue was also noted in our report issued on April 24, 2007.

During our follow-up review in 2010, all four additional case files reviewed documented that the children or their social workers were appropriately informed.

- Two (40%) of the five children reviewed in 2008 exceeded the maximum age (17 years old) for services and the Agency did not have documentation of an exception from CDSS CCL as required. This issue was also noted in our report issued on April 24, 2007.

During our follow-up review in 2010, two (67%) of the three additional children reviewed exceeded the maximum age and the Agency did not have documentation of an exception from CCL.

- Two (40%) of the five children reviewed in 2008 received initial dental examinations 51 and 84 days late, respectively. This issue was also noted in our report issued on April 24, 2007.

During our follow-up review in 2010, two (67%) of the three additional children reviewed both received initial dental examinations 13 days late.

### **Recommendations**

**Secure Transitions management ensure:**

1. **Assessments are completed for homes where more than two children are placed.**
2. **Foster parent certification files have all the required information including documentation of training hours, CPR certificates, driver's licenses, and proof of automobile insurance.**

3. NSPs are accurate and approved by the DCFS social workers.
4. NSPs include goals that are specific, measurable and time-limited.
5. NSPs for children taking psychotropic medication include a discussion on the children's use of the medication.
6. Quarterly Reports are prepared timely and include the children's progress toward achieving goals.
7. Quarterly Reports include children's report cards.
8. DCFS social workers are updated monthly regarding the children's progress.
9. Children meet the age criteria for services.
10. Children and the DCFS social workers are informed of the Agency's policies and procedures.
11. Children's initial dental examinations are conducted timely.

### **CLIENT VERIFICATION**

#### **Objective**

Determine whether the program participants received the services that Secure Transitions billed to DCFS.

#### **Verification**

We interviewed five children placed in three of Secure Transitions' certified foster homes and three foster parents to confirm the services the Agency billed to DCFS.

#### **Results**

The foster children indicated they enjoyed living with their foster parents and the foster parents indicated that the services they received from the Agency met their expectations.

#### **Recommendation**

**None.**



## **STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS**

### **Objective**

Verify that Secure Transitions social workers' caseloads do not exceed 15 placements and that the supervising social worker does not supervise more than six social workers as required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

### **Verification**

We interviewed Secure Transitions' administrator and reviewed caseload statistics and payroll records for the Agency's social workers and supervising social worker.

### **Results**

At the time of our 2008 review, Secure Transitions' three social workers carried an average caseload of 12 cases and the Agency's supervising social worker supervised three social workers. However, Secure Transitions has a part-time contract social worker that did not sign a declaration stating that their combined caseload at all agencies will not exceed 15 children as required. This issue was also noted in our report issued on April 24, 2007.

During our follow-up review in 2010, Secure Transitions did not have any contracted social workers.

### **Recommendation**

- 12. Secure Transitions management ensure that contract social workers sign declarations stating that their combined caseload at all agencies will not exceed 15 children.**

## **STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Objective**

Determine whether Secure Transitions' staff possess the education and work experience qualifications required by their County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. In addition, determine whether the Agency conducted hiring clearances prior to hiring their staff and provided ongoing training to staff.

### **Verification**

We interviewed Secure Transitions' administrator and reviewed each staff's personnel file for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearances and ongoing training.

**Results**

Secure Transitions' staff possessed the required education and work experience and the Agency conducted hiring clearances and provided ongoing training for staff working on the County contract.

**Recommendation**

None.

**PRIOR YEAR FOLLOW-UP****Objective**

Determine the status of the recommendations reported in the prior Auditor-Controller monitoring review.

**Verification**

We verified whether the outstanding recommendations from the FY 2005-06 monitoring review were implemented. The report was issued on April 24, 2007.

**Results**

Our April 24, 2007 monitoring report had 17 recommendations. The Agency has fully implemented ten recommendations and partially implemented one recommendation. However, the Agency has not implemented six recommendations primarily related to assessing foster homes, certifying that foster parents, eligibility of the children for services, dental exam timeliness, completing and approving NSPs, and contract social worker caseloads.

**Recommendation**

- 13. Secure Transitions management implement the outstanding recommendations from the April 24, 2007 monitoring report.**

*SECURE*

*TRANSITIONS, Inc.*  
A Foster Family Transition Agency

3711 W. SLOAN AVENUE, SUITE 250 CHRYSLER CITY, CA 90230 (310) 342-3950 / FAX: (310) 342-3955

January 16, 2011

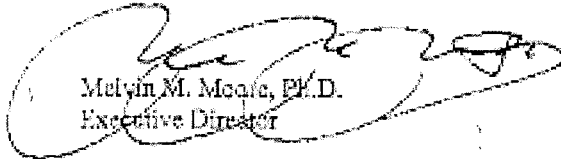
Alice Marutani, M.A.  
Program Specialist II  
Countywide Contract Monitoring Division  
350 South Figueroa Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, Ca 90071

Dear Ms. Marutani:

Enclosed is Secure Transitions Foster Family Agency's Corrective Action Plan (CAP) prepared in response to the foster family agency contract review conducted by the Los Angeles County Department of Auditor-Controller during March 2010.

Please contact me immediately if you require an explanation of submitted documentation or need additional information.

Yours truly,



Melvin M. Moore, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

**SECURE TRANSITIONS FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT REVIEW**

**CORECTIVE ACTION PLAN  
January 11, 2011**

Secure Transitions Foster Family agency shall develop a system of accountability that consists of checklists and checkpoints to ensure better compliance with Title 22 regulations, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) policies, and Secure Transitions' policies and procedures.

The agency's new compliance system is expected to increase agency social workers' ability to adhere to regulations, policies, and procedures and to increase their ability to successfully fulfill their responsibilities to placed children, to certified parents, and to the agency.

This system will incorporate, when fully developed, agency expectations and measures of performance based on the above mentioned regulations, policies, and procedures, and will be monitored by the agency's Executive Director.

Checklists will be distributed to agency social workers at the beginning of each month to be completed and submitted to the Executive Director at the beginning of the next month.

Every three months the Executive Director and Program Administrator will meet with any social worker who consistently fails to meet the specified performance measures; this conference is to determine reasons for the deficiency and to implement corrective measures.

The system identified above will utilize a Performance Measures Checklist that will include the following responsibilities and tasks and will be revised as circumstances dictate. Agency social workers will "check-off" and date all tasks completed during the month.

## **Agency Expectations**

### **Social Worker Responsibilities and Tasks**

=====

#### **Admissions:**

- As Duty Worker and fulfilling intake duties, follow guidelines on last page of Admission Questionnaire pertaining to placement of a child in home in which two (2) children are currently residing, including the certified parent's children. Ensure that referred child meet the age criteria for services.

#### **Additions to Caseload:**

- Discuss agency's policies and procedures with newly placed children within three (3) days of placement.
- Read or if age-appropriate, have them read, the agency's New Placement Orientation packet that includes discussion of: the agency's commitment to and responsibility toward placed children; clothing and monetary allowance; house rules; personal rights Bill of Rights of placed children; role of the California Ombudsman for foster care; agency's grievance procedure, discipline procedure, discharge/transfer procedure; and discipline policy.
- Have placed child and certified parent sign to indicate their understanding of policies and procedures.
- Arrange to have Placement Orientation mailed to placed child's CSW for signature.
- Provide certified parent with verbal or written reminders of dates of initial medical and dental examinations for all newly placed children.

#### **DCFS Social Worker Contact:**

- Make contact with CSW by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month to report each child's progress. If CSW not is available, leave voice message, but make several attempts to contact personally.



**Counseling Notes:**

- Submit counseling notes the week following each child contact.
- Provide detailed information about child's care and supervision, behavior, medical and dental visits, certified parent concerns, general condition of the foster family home.

**Needs and Services Plan:**

- Develop in collaboration with certified parent and placed child, if age appropriate; obtain parent's signature.
- Develop goals that are specific, age-appropriate, and measurable, and time-limited.
- Add new goals, if necessary, in updated Needs and Services Plans.
- For children taking psychotropic medication include a discussion on the children's use and certified parent's administration of medication.
- Submit to Program Administrator for approval at least two (2) weeks prior to due date.
- Ensure that County Social Worker (CSW) approves of developed Plan, by following up with CSW or Technical Assistant regarding return signature.

**Quarterly Report:**

- Submit to Program Administrator for approval two (2) weeks before due date.
- Include the children's progress toward achieving the goals specified in Needs & Services Plans.
- Include an Emancipation Preparation Contract for Children fourteen (14) years of age and older; make sure a copy is in the case file of every placed child over fourteen (14) years of age on your caseload.
- Include children's reports cards.

**Age Criteria:**

- The agency serves children from infant to eighteen (18) years of age. If a placed child turns nineteen (19) years of age while still in placement, request an age-exception from DCFS and from Community Care Licensing at least three (3) months prior to the placed child's birthday.

**Emancipation Preparation Contract:**

- *Complete for all placed children on your caseload who are fourteen (14) years of age and older; update at least every six (6) months.*

**Home Visits:**

- Visit family home once a week if child has been in placement for less than three (3) months; visit home every other week if child has been in placement for more than three (3) months.
- Engage in cursory inspection of certified family home every home visit; ensure that home is clean, safe, sanitary, and in good repair.
- Alert Executive Director to any situation in the home, e.g., safety, health, that requires special attention.
- Conduct home inspection once every two (2) months; use agency home inspection checklist. Provide certified parent with Deficiency Correction Form. Submit home inspection evaluation to Executive Director.
- During each visit inquire of certified parent regarding special incidents, changes in household, changes in placed child's behavior, and placed child's visits with biological parents; inquire of placed child regarding complaints or issues.
- Ensure that placed children meet the age criteria for services.
- Collect allowance logs, weight records, school progress reports, medical and dental visit logs, clothing receipts, all other documentation that reflects on care and supervision of placed child.
- Ensure that all adults living in the home and adults whom have frequent and routine contact with placed children are fingerprint cleared.

**Medical and Dental Examinations:**

- Issue verbal or written reminders to certified parents on your caseload regarding dates of medical and dental examinations for all placed children residing in the family home.

**Disaster Drill:**

- Conduct disaster drill or observe disaster drill every two months; complete Disaster Drill Form.

**Recertification:**

- Prior to conducting recertification interview, determine if required certified foster parent documentation is current: e.g., training hours, CPR, and first aid certificates, driver's licenses, auto registration, proof of automobile insurance, etc.
- Inform certified parent of need for updated documentation; collect copies of updated documents.
- Conduct recertification interview with certified parent at least a week prior to due date.

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

**Specific Recommendations**

**SECURE TRANSITIONS MANAGEMENT WILL ENSURE THAT:**

1. Assessments are completed for homes where more than two children are placed.
  - See "Admissions" above.
2. Foster parent certification files have all the required information including documentation of training hours, CPR certificates, driver's licenses and proof of automobile insurance.
  - See "Recertification" above. In addition, Technical Assistant will monitor, through use of Foster Track software, the above documentation and will mail reminders to certified parents as documentation expiration dates of approach.
3. Needs and Services Plans are accurate and approved by the CPS social workers.
  - See "Needs and Services Plan" above. In addition, the agency's Program Administrator will review of all submitted Needs and Services Plans, have them corrected by the submitting agency social worker or correct them herself, if necessary.
4. Needs and Services Plans include goals that are specific, measurable and time limited.
  - See "Needs and Services Plan" above. In addition, the agency's Program Administrator will review of all submitted Needs and Services Plans, have them corrected by the submitting agency social worker or correct them herself, if necessary.
5. Needs and Services Plans for children taking psychotropic medication include a discussion on the children's use of the medication.
  - See "Needs and Services Plan" above.

6. Quarterly Reports are prepared timely and include the children's progress toward achieving goals.
  - See "Quarterly Report" above. . In addition, the agency's Program Administrator will review of all submitted Quarterly Reports, have them corrected by the submitting agency social worker or correct them herself, if necessary
7. Quarterly Reports include an Emancipation Preparation Contract for Children 14 years of age and older.
  - See "Quarterly Report" above.
8. Quarterly Reports include children's reports cards.
  - See "Quarterly Report" above.
9. DCFS social worker are updated monthly regarding the children's progress
  - See "DCFS Social Worker Contact" above.
10. Children meet the age criteria for services.
  - See "Admissions" and "Age Criteria" above.
11. Children and the DCFS social workers are informed of the Agency's policies and procedures.
  - See "Additions to Caseload" above. In addition to above, the agency will produce and provide to all CSWs of placed children, an agency fact sheet outlining the agency's policies and procedures.
12. Children's Initial dental examinations are conducted timely.
  - See "Medical and Dental Examinations" above.
13. Contract social workers sign declarations stating that their combined caseload at all agencies will not exceed 15 children.
  - This recommendation has been addressed; the last agency's contract social worker's contract was revised to include a statement to this effect. The agency does not currently have contract social workers in its employ.



14. Implementation of the outstanding recommendations from the prior monitoring report.

- Implementation and rigorous monitoring of the agency's Performance Measures Checklist will ensure that all outstanding recommendations from the prior monitoring report will be implemented.



ANTONIA JIMENEZ  
Acting Director

County of Los Angeles  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, CA 90020

March 3, 2011

TO: Aggie Alonso, Chief Accountant-Auditor  
Countywide Contract Monitoring Division

FROM: Elizabeth A. Howard, Section Head  
Out-of-Home Care Management Division  
Foster Family Agency/Group Home Performance Management

Board of Supervisors  
GLORIA MOLINA  
First District  
MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS  
Second District  
ZEY YAROSLAVSKY  
Third District  
DON KNABE  
Fourth District  
MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
Fifth District

**DCFS RESPONSE TO THE AUDITOR CONTROLLER'S CONTRACT REVIEW OF  
SECURE TRANSITIONS FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY**

The Auditor Controller's (A-C) Contract Review of Secure Transitions Foster Family Agency was conducted in September/October 2008 and a follow up review was in March 2010. The Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) received the Auditor-Controller's February 25, 2011 final draft report of the contract compliance review on February 25, 2011.

The A-C's final draft report found no egregious findings which rose to the level of a referral to the Child Protection Hotline. The report, however, noted that during their initial review, there were findings that one of three homes reviewed had not been assessed to determine the foster parents' ability to care for more than two placed children; two of three foster parents had not completed the required annual continuing education training hours; some foster parents' files did not include current driver's licenses, proof of automobile insurance, and one foster parent's CPR certificate had expired. This was corrected subsequent to the A-C's initial review however, it was a repeated finding in their March 2010 follow up review. The initial review also noted that children's progress to DCFS CSWs was not consistently documented; some placed children exceeded the maximum age requirement and Community Care Licensing age exceptions had expired; one of five children's case files did not have documentation that children or their DCFS CSW was informed of the child's personal rights and the agency's policies and procedures; two of five children received late initial dental examinations; one part-time contract social worker had not signed a declaration indicating their combined caseload would not exceed 15 children. The A-C's report also noted that Secure Transitions had several Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) and Quarterly Report findings, some of which included, NSPs were not approved by the DCFS CSW; goals were not specific, measureable, time-limited, or comprehensive including all required elements; and some NSPs contained inaccurate

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**DCFS RESPONSE TO THE AUDITOR CONTROLLER'S CONTRACT REVIEW OF  
SECURE TRANSITIONS FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY**

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and conflicting information. Some Quarterly Reports were prepared late, did not include children's progress toward goals or information on the children's report cards. The A-C's report further states that during their follow up review, all three children's files reviewed for children on psychotropic medication did not contain the required documentation of monthly evaluations by the prescribing physician and the medication logs were not updated.

While some of the recommendations were noted to be corrected during the A-C's March 2010 follow up review, (i.e. sampled foster parents had been properly assessed; sampled foster parents had completed the required education training hours; and documentation of children; sampled children's files contained NSPs with specific, measurable, time limited goals; and the DCFS CSW were informed of the child's personal rights and the agency's policies and procedures), they found that several recommendations had not been fully implemented and requested corrective action. Secure Transitions submitted a Corrective Action Plan dated January 16, 2011 which addressed each of the A-C's recommendations.

Given that the A-C's report indicates several repeated findings, the OHCMMD will assess for full implementation of the A-C's recommendations within six months of issuance of their final report and determine if necessary progressive action is warranted.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (828) 589-6804.

KR:EAH